

# Out of Gown









1st Ed. 125

L. Belle Ford

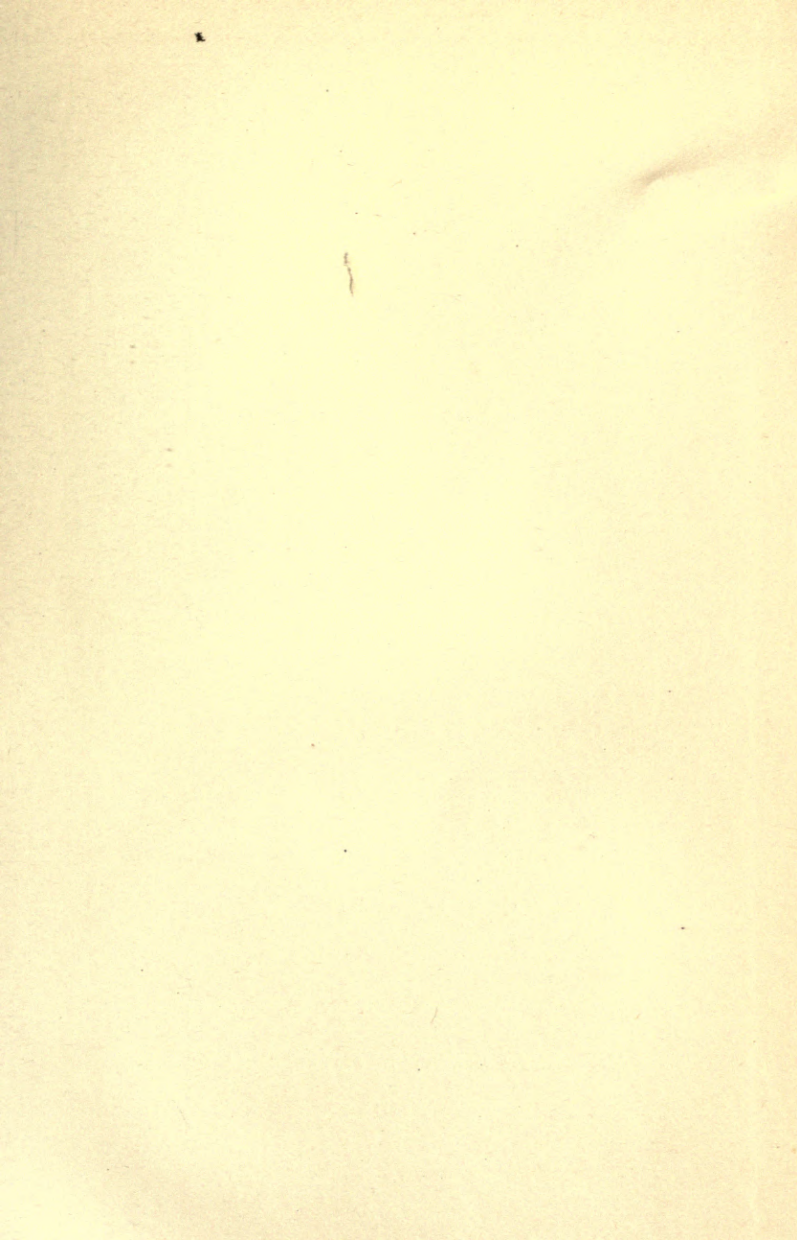
Ontario

1897













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"MISS MARY DRESSED IN SEVERELY CLASSIC DRAPERIES."



# OUT OF TOWN

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

ROSINA EMMET SHERWOOD



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Out of Town.

A Question of Identity

A Little Music.

The Railroad Humorist.

Moments with Mechanics.

Village Theatricals.

The Professor.

The Lawn-Tennis Match.

The Naphtha Launch.

The Wedding.







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OUT OF TOWN







I

MR. WILLIAM HARFORD (æ. 28).

MR. CLARENCE H. DE VINNEY (æ. 24).

MISS MARY BURNHAM (æ. 22).

MR. EDWARD MILLER (æ. 42).

MRS. EDWARD MILLER (æ. 35).

SCENE.—The drawing-room of a comfortable country-house at Starling Station, forty-three minutes from City Hall. Easy-chairs, tables strewn with magazines and illustrated papers; numerous photographs on the mantel. A few doubtful-looking geraniums in a wooden box trying to struggle into bloom in the window. Lamps are lit, a wood fire burns brightly in the open fireplace, and a general atmosphere of good cheer prevails. In a card-receiver are two or three very



old visiting-cards on which the children have scribbled pictures of pigs, a back-number time-table of the C. L. and S. L. Railroad, with a small card of the Starling Station branch, and a list of the meets of the Lawn Club drag-hunts.

Harford (*solus*) is rapt in contemplation of a photograph of Miss Mary taken in the costume in which she appeared as Diana at Mrs. Marsh's tableaux.

He murmurs: "Out-of-the-way place this! Late down town; no dinner to speak of; of course no stage at the station, and had to walk two miles nearly, through the mud. Never mind!" (Cautiously takes the photo to the light and examines it closely.) "How lovely she must have looked! What a fool I was not to go! Her head is awfully well put



on. Well, American girls certainly—" (He hears the rustle of a dress on the stairs, and hastily restores the photograph to its place.) "Now if I could only see her alone for a little while!"

Enter Miss Mary, who greets him cordially, but with a slight touch of iciness in her manner.

*Miss Mary.* "So very nice of you to come out, Mr. Harford. Edward and my sister made up their minds to have a little holiday, after being shut up here all this long cold winter, so they took all the children into town for the circus. Dear little Jack has grown to be such a big boy, and he is *so* clever!" ("How adorable she is with children!" thinks Harford.) "So I was left here to take care of Aunty Wilson, who has been laid up with the grippe, and to guard the house against burglars." (She laughs



a little, and the young man expands his chest and looks as if he would like to slay the burglar who dared.)

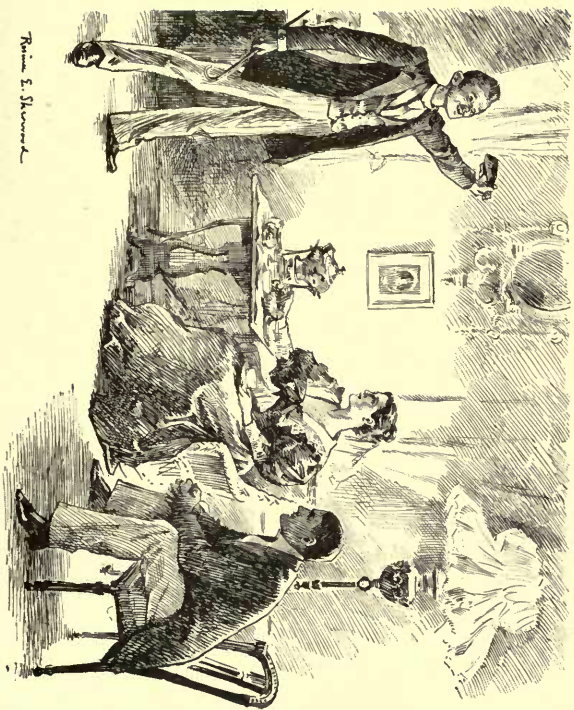
*Miss Mary* goes on: "And do you mean to tell me that you couldn't find the stage to bring you down? That wretched Brisbane is always at a fireman's parade, or a barn-raising, or something. And you had to walk all the way down?" (She melts a degree or so, but refrigerates again as Harford's expression becomes dangerously rapturous.)

*Harford.* "Yes, I walked down, but I assure you it was a lovely evening, and—"

*Miss Mary.* "Well, then you certainly need a good cup of tea or something. Of course; why didn't I think of it before?"

She runs across the room and begins





*Reuben S. Shumard*

“‘HOW DO YOU LIKE THE CENTRE-STREET WHEELMEN?’”







to drag a tea-table from a corner. Harford hastens to help her, when steps are heard on the piazza and the door-bell rings. Miss Mary looks anxious for a moment, and Harford feels an insane hope that it may be only a tramp or a burglar, but the maid enters, announcing, "Mr. De Vinney, ma'am."

*Miss Mary* (hastily, to Harford, who is glowering at the door). "Mr. De Vinney—excellent young man, from the village, who supports his mother and sisters; keeps a little shop—tidies, circulating library, and all that."

De Vinney enters — tallish young man; frock-coat, rather too short; electric-blue trousers, a shade too long. He carries in his right hand a pair of very shiny kid gloves and a light rattan stick; in his left a soft knockabout hat.



Miss Mary, after shaking hands, introduces : "Mr. Harford—Mr. De Vinney."

Harford grumbles a salutation.

*De Vinney* (cheerfully accurate). "I did not quite catch the name?" (in the meantime holding Harford's hand, and turning his head towards Miss Burnham with an inquiring smile). "Oh! Harford. Mr. Harford, 'm pleased to meet you. Don't know 's I ever heard the name before—something like Hartford, ain't it?" (He laughs, and takes a seat in a remote corner of the room. Harford and Miss Burnham seat themselves near the tea-table, the maid having meanwhile brought in the tea.)

*Miss Mary*. "May I give you a cup of tea, Mr. De Vinney?"

*De Vinney*. "'M obliged, but it's something I never touch. I was reading in the weekly *Clarion*, the other day, of



the large percentage of deaths due to nervous diseases, traceable to tea-drinking, in a province of China. I don't just recall the name of the place, but when you come to think of the component parts of tea—volatile oil, resin, gum, wax, tannin, woody fibre, and the rest—it's no wonder."

*Harford* (trying to get into the conversation). "Miss Mary, did you go to the vaudeville at Harry Blake's last week? They say it was extremely clever—Japanese jugglers; Jadetsky, the Polish 'cellist; little Miss Graham in that capital song, 'Mercy! what will Bob say to that?' and a lot of good singing and dancing."

*Miss Mary*. "No; and I was very sorry. Let me see; that was Tuesday, and the Williamses were here."

*De Vinney*. "And that was the day



of our big bicycle parade. It would have been a treat to you to see it, Mr. Harford—twenty-seven machines represented. Let's see" (he half closes one eye and looks up at the ceiling)—"there were the Get There, the Auchmuty, the Overland, the Centaur, the Baby Ruth—" (he gives the names of the other twenty-one bicycles).

*Miss Mary* (glancing at Harford). "It must have been very interesting." There is an awkward pause.

*De Vinney* continues: "Yes; some of the boys had their bikes dressed up elegantly with flags and flowers, and when we got in front of the brick block we gave our cheer." (He rises, and waves his hat and cane in unison with the rhyme.)

"By bo Bike,  
How do you like  
The Centre-Street wheelmen?  
By bo Bike!"





MRS. EDWARD MILLER AND THE TWO CHILDREN







During this recital Harford edges about uneasily in his chair and bows his head. Miss Mary turns slightly, and, while she adjusts a hair-pin, stifles a yawn.

Harford, inwardly vowing that he will outstay the meritorious De Vinney, even if it should be necessary to foot it back to town, glances at the clock: "By-the-way, when can I get a train back to town?"

Miss Mary looks inquiringly at De Vinney, who says, "Well, I don't hardly remember just when the trains do go, but this will tell—fortunate I brought them with me." (He draws from his pocket several small paper-bound books, and hands one to each of the others.) "They're a very useful article—*De Vinney's Flowerettes of Information*, a handbook I got up awhile ago. Contains



heights of Pyramids, Washington Monument, St. Peter's at Rome (Italy), Equitable Life building, and other structures and edifices; tables of weights and coins." Then, rather roguishly, to Miss Mary: "Now, I don't believe you know what the equivalent is, in American coin, of a Mahbub of twenty piasters, hey?" (He is overcome with merriment at Miss Mary's failure to respond.)

Harford, who is gloomily studying the *Flowerettes*, finds trains at 10.38 and 11.18. He resolves to make a feint for the earlier train, thus starting De Vinney, then to return for a few blissful moments.

*Harford.* "Really, I'm very sorry, but I think I must make a try for the 10.38." He rises and goes towards Miss Mary, who is beginning to show signs of weariness. She glances in the direction of



De Vinney with a look, Harford fancies, of intense boredom, so he says: "Good-night, Miss Mary. Are you ready for a walk, Mr. De Vinney?"

*De Vinney.* "Well, can't say as I am. I got to meet my partner, Mr. Eddy, who's been in buying goods. He's due, if the 'Rusher' from Union Depot is on time, at 12.10, so I guess I won't start just yet. Miss Burnham is one of those owls, so she says, and don't mind sitting up. 'M I right, Miss Burnham?"

Miss Mary gives a good-natured assent, and Harford rather awkwardly explains that perhaps he may as well wait for the later train, after all.

*De Vinney* (cheerfully ignoring Harford's break). "Miss Burnham, you haven't been in the store lately. We've made some changes there—moved the cash-drawer up front, and changed the



soda-fountain over on the other side. Makes it a good deal handier. Presume likely you noticed the window when you went up street; we had it fixed up by a professional window-dresser from Brooklyn. He did it elegant; but after he got all through, the boy slipped in and put a baseball cap on the bust of Venus, and it looked so kinder comical, Eddy and me thought we'd leave it."

At this juncture a clatter and commotion is heard on the piazza, the dogs bark, and then enter Mr. and Mrs. Edward Miller and two children. Miss Mary rushes to embrace little Jack. Numerous explanations follow, all talking at once. The miserable hotel-man said he never got the telegram, and the place was full of people who came in to see the Bicentennial torch-light parade,





"HARFORD REACHED HIS CLUB IN A VERY BAD HUMOR"







and the streets were really beautifully illuminated—but, oh, *if* they could all have seen the children at the circus, they enjoyed it so much! The little girl Marian tells startling tales about the elephant to De Vinney, who listens sympathetically, snaps imaginary whip, and says, “Whoa, January!” Harford, who is standing a little apart, attempts to appear interested, but somehow feels that he isn’t in it. He occasionally tries to get in a word with Miss Mary, who, in her excitement over the children, seems to have forgotten his existence. She disappears, carrying little Jack off to bed, and Harford listens for a few minutes to complaints from Mr. Edward Miller about the wretched train service between town and Starling.

Harford enthusiastically endorses all Miller’s complaints, but Miller seems to



resent this, so Harford drops the subject. De Vinney reminds him that he has just time to catch the train, and he leaves, Miss Mary appearing on the stairs in time to give him a hurried good-bye. She and Mrs. Miller beg him to come again, and De Vinney urges him to call over at the store when he happens round Centre Street way. The train is half an hour late, and Harford reaches his club in a very bad humor. He makes up his mind that marriage is a failure, that existence in the suburbs is fitted only for savages, and that club life with a lot of good fellows is, after all, the only life for a young man in moderately comfortable circumstances. Then he sits down and writes to Schwartzwalder & Klumpke, the florists, ordering a large box of Merovingia roses to be sent to Miss Mary





"SHE ALWAYS LIKED THOSE ROSES"







Burnham, Starling-on-the-Bay. "She always liked those roses," he says to himself as he smokes his cigar on the way home.







A QUESTION OF IDENTITY







## II

*(From William Harford, Esq., to Richard Appleton, Esq., Elkhorn Ranch, Sands Run, Wyoming.)*

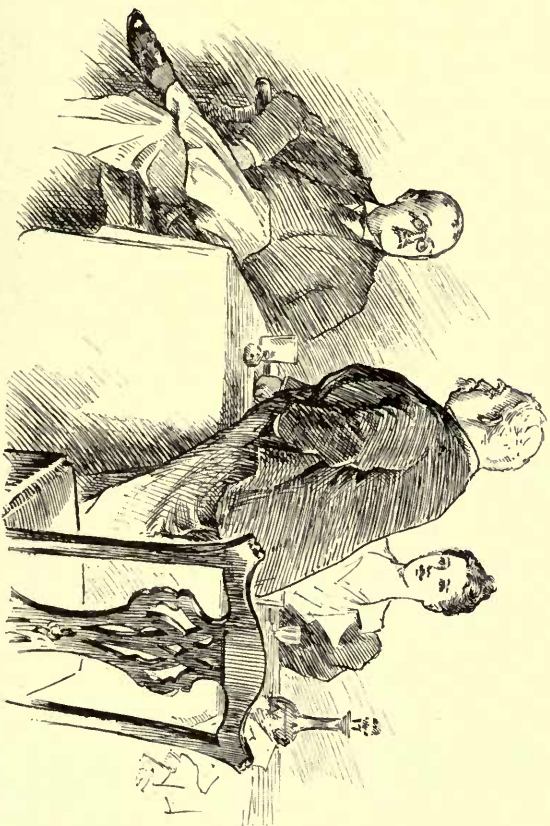
DEAR DICK,— I have your letter of the 23d, and sent the polo mallets and cartridges as you asked me to do, and also the papers with accounts of the yacht-race. Why complain of exile, when you have so much chance for sport and can be your own master, instead of stewing in a musty office all day, as I have to do?

By-the-way, your suspicions about my visits to that place out-of-town are totally unfounded. There is nobody at the club now, and when I have a little



spare time is it to be wondered at that I like to get a breath of fresh air, a little exercise at tennis, and a chance to handle a boat? And then again, you know, I have always had a fad for studying human nature, and the Miller household at Starling is a fine field for that. They are the most original, interesting lot of people! [Harford says to himself that this is not at all likely to go down with his friend Appleton, but he buries his head in the sand and proceeds.] Miller is a conventional suburban, whose conversation runs riot in plumbing, time-tables, and local anecdote; Mrs. Miller, a kindly, comfortable person, who, unbeknown to her husband, rules him and the household with a velvet paw. Then there is Miss Burnham, Mrs. Miller's sister, who is rather an attractive young woman [Phœbus





“BENSON? WHY, MAN, YOU'RE LOSING YOUR SENSES!”







Apollo, thinks Harford, what a tame description!]; two children, more or less obtrusive at times; Uncle Chad, and no end of cousins and relations, who live in the neighborhood, and spend all their waking hours at the Millers'. The other day I went out there for a sail, and waited over for dinner. The meal was passed in an excited discussion, which continued until late in the evening, over the identity of a certain commuter on the train, whom I had noticed once or twice, and rashly inquired about.

"That's Benson, the candy-man in the village," said Miller, in his decisive way.

"Benson?" retorted Uncle Chad—"Benson? Why, man, you're losing your senses. Harford describes him as a tall slender man with sandy hair;



Benson is short and stout, with a red face."

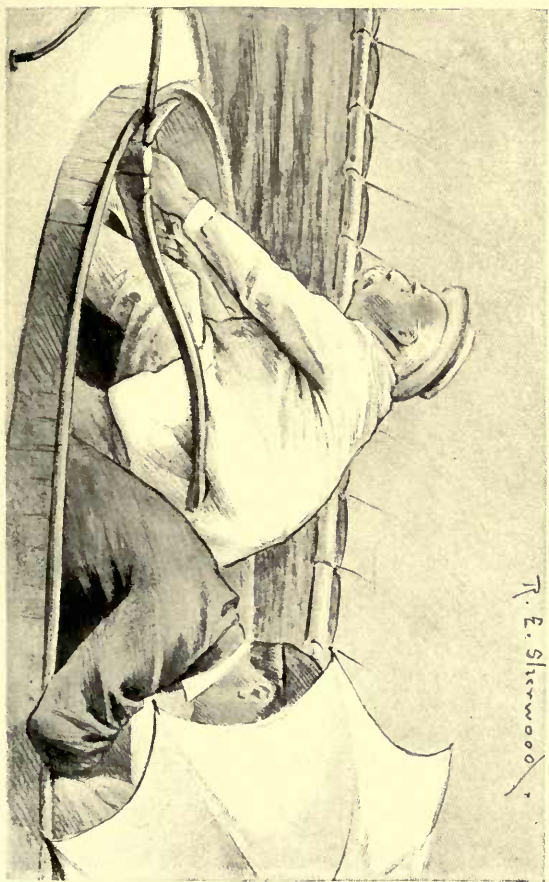
"Benson is dead," remarks Mrs. Miller, seriously. This statement sets them all shouting, protesting, and contradicting at once. The group separates, Uncle Chad and Miller going out on the piazza, where they wrangle over Benson's personal appearance. One of the cousins suggests that I may mean Striker of Centreville, who always used to drive down to the beach with his wife, and then go in bathing with that pretty Wilkes girl.

"That wasn't Miss Wilkes at all," said Miss Burnham; "it was his cousin, Miss Irene something or other."

"And the lady who drives him down isn't his wife, Johnny," shouts Uncle Chad from the piazza; "it's his sister."



R. E. Sherwood



"A CHANCE TO HANDLE A BOAT"







Johnny is snubbed for trying to get up a village scandal, and subsides.

"By-the-way, Harford," says Uncle Chad, appearing at the window, "this man that you spoke of—had he a yellowish mustache?"

"Yes, I think he had."

"And a slight limp?" suggested Miller.

"Yes."

"And shiny black clothes?" asked one of the children.

"Yes, black clothes."

"Oh! oh! oh!" they all shouted, "that's Riordan, Mr. Master's professional nurse!"

"Limps quite a good deal?" said Miller, confidently.

"Decidedly blond yellow mustache?" from Uncle Chad.

"The blackest kind of clothes?" said the child who had spoken before.



Then a general joyful chorus of: "Riordan; of course it's Riordan! Why didn't we think of him before?" I joined in the general jubilee over the discovery of Riordan's identity, when Mrs. Miller inquired, laconically,

"Whiskers?"

"I beg your pardon?" said I.

"Has he whiskers?"

"No," I replied, sadly; "no whiskers."

"Then it isn't Riordan," said Uncle Chad, grumpily, with a manner plainly implying that I had misled them in my description.

"Riordan may have shaved his whiskers," somebody suggested.

"But he couldn't have," said little Jack, "'cause I saw him getting off the 5.28 to-day, an' he had his whiskers an'—an'—everything."

With indescribable energy they hunt-



R. E. Sherwood.  
1893.



"A LITTLE EXERCISE AT TENNIS"







ed down various clues for perhaps half an hour, during which time the height, weight, and general conformation of this mysterious individual were rehearsed in minute detail, each going over the same ground again and again with some degree of acrimony.

Finally a cousin who had just arrived said he believed he knew who it was. That limp, and the yellowish mustache, and hair a little darker, could belong to no one but that man Graham, who was a gambler from Lindhurst. Surely it could be no one else. Uncle Chad and the others of the family crowded about me and plied me with questions.

Everything tallied, even down to a slight scar just above the left eye, which I gladly admitted, although I had failed to notice it. There was a triumphant shout of joy—such as must have gone



up when the sailors on the caravels discovered the land stretched out before their hungry eyes. Graham was the man. The Lindhurst gambler filled the bill in every particular, and peace again reigned over the house of Miller.

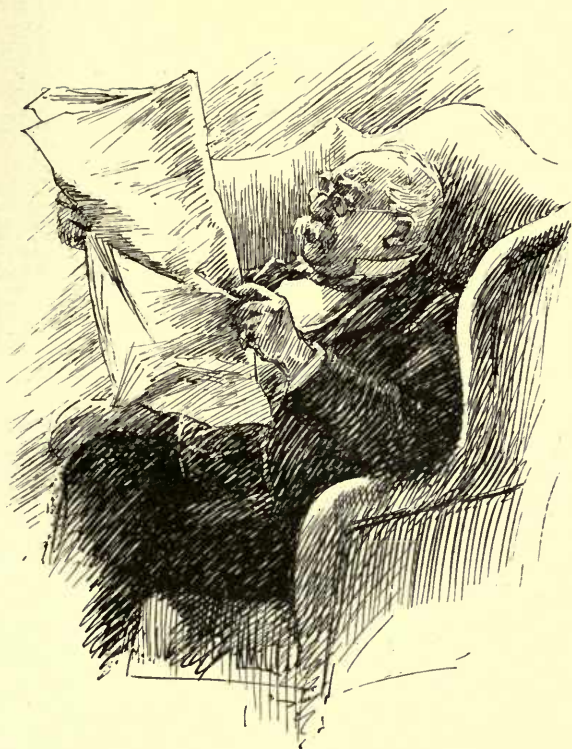
That night at the station I made some inquiries, and found that the individual in question was a modest divinity student named Elisha Smith, who was quietly pursuing his studies at the theological seminary.

By-by, old man; I hope to get out to the ranch for a little shooting in October.

Yours,

BILL.





UNCLE CHAD







A LITTLE MUSIC







### III

THEY had a musical evening at the Millers', and Harford decided to be there, in order that he might pursue his studies of human nature in the suburbs; also incidentally to watch Miss Mary at the piano, where, Harford thought, she combined the attributes of a seraphic angel with the genius of a Mozart.

The family were all present, including a vast number of cousins of both sexes. De Vinney was there in the familiar frock-coat; Tommy Mason, who, they said, sang such inimitable comic songs; Mr. T. S. Johnstone Leigh, an anglicized American youth, very horsy, round shouldered, steeped in gloom,



and halting of speech; Miss Landon, one of the Lawn Club set, tall, blond, and thoroughly well groomed, with a rich, low voice, and an inexhaustible fund of conversation.

Mr. Miller, early in the evening, issued a ukase that the exercises, as he called them, should proceed strictly in accordance with a programme that he had prepared, and he announced, in a sonorous voice, after referring to a slip of paper which he held in his hand, that the first piece would be a mixed quartet entitled "The Serf's Complaint," by Pellerini: soprano, Miss Burnham; contralto, Miss Landon; first bass, Miller; second bass, Uncle Chad. The performers, with the exception of Miller, occupied some time at the piano rehearsing their parts, Uncle Chad protesting violently that they never sang it





R. E. Sherrard.

"TO ASK IF HE HAD ENJOYED HIS 'DRAHVE'"







just that way at the old house on the Middle Road early in the forties, because in the first part of the refrain he was positive that the bass "rum tum diddy um diddy ido dum" was a solo, and that the first bass ought to wait until he got through. He glared angrily at Miller, who said he didn't understand it that way, and that it was contrary to all principles of counterpoint. Just at that moment Miss Mary was called away to make some arrangements about supper, and Miss Landon turned to Leigh to ask if he had enjoyed his "drahve" to the kennels. Leigh wrinkled his brow, lifted his eyebrows, dropped his eyes, thrust his hands in his pockets, and murmured something in reply which is lost to history.

"But do you know," Miss Landon went on, "I'm really not so keen about



drahving when you have a chance to rahde, because there is nothing so lovely as a gallop on these cool afternoons, with fahve - o'clock tea when you get back, and then lots of tahme to dress and dahne when you lahke."

In the meantime one of the cousins, Miss Alice somebody, whose name Harford never was able to discover, suggested, in an impulsive way, that Mr. Mason should sing the "Nightingale Song."

"Oh, ye-e-es, the 'Nightingale Song'!" shouted all the other cousins in unison. Miller urged that this was a departure from the programme, but just at that moment he was called to the telephone, where he was heard a moment later arguing with Crooks, the plumber, about a defective stopper which had been put in one of the laundry tubs that day.





"THE COUSINS ALL ECHOED, 'SING AGAIN!'"







Miss Mary explained to Harford, *sotto-voce*, that little Mason really had an exquisite voice, although he seldom sang anything but comic songs, and she rushed to the piano to listen to the "Nightingale Song" with an enthusiasm which Harford thought unwarranted by the character of the performance.

"Sing again! sing again! sing again!" roared Mason, and the cousins all echoed "Sing again!" until Harford wished that Mason, with his nightingales, could be immersed in the water of the bay.

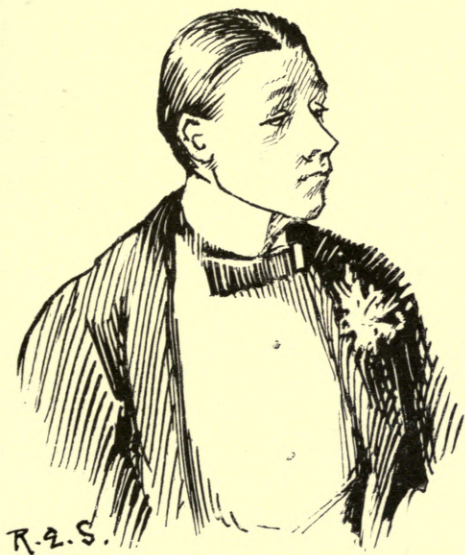
This over, Miller insisted on a return to "The Serf's Complaint," an unsuccessful performance, in which Miller predominated with an indifferent but aggressive first bass. At this point Mrs. Miller smilingly interposed, whispered a few words in her husband's ear, fur-tively tore up the programme he had



prepared, and suggested that Mr. Leigh should sing that hunting-song he learned at Eton. Leigh murmured something about having forgotten the words, but Uncle Chad suggested a brandy-and-soda, and Miss Landon promised to attempt an accompaniment, so he was finally persuaded to lift up his voice in "Reynard the Boy," a melody which went on through thirteen stanzas, each one ending with a wild, ear-piercing "whoo-whoop!" However silent and unintelligible the young man might be ordinarily, Harford thought, it was not from absence of lung-power, as all the children were awakened, and Mrs. Miller disappeared, not to return for the remainder of the evening.

Then followed a miscellaneous collection of opera-bouffe, comic songs, and Gilbert and Sullivan, Miller in the mean-





MR. T. S. JOHNSTONE LEIGH







time taking a seat by Harford, and discoursing on the outrageous attitude of the village supervisors on the subject of the Graham Avenue sewer. Crooks, the plumber, was really at the bottom of the whole business with his devilish scheming. Then there was that drain on Myrtle Street, just near Hackett's house.

At this juncture Miller's attention was diverted to a piece of fly-paper which had blown, sticky side down, on a bundle of legal documents on his desk, and Harford improved the opportunity to follow Miss Mary out on the piazza, she having obtained a brief respite from the piano. It was a beautiful moonlit night, and she seemed so lovely and gracious that perhaps Harford thought the moment might be near, when from the piano—



“Ain’t she the corkingest girl of the lot,  
Ain’t she the dawn of the dye,  
Ain’t she the dimply dear little dot,  
The dyesy I met at the plye?”

This from Mason, the cousins demanding it again and again, and finally urging a repetition of the “Nightingale Song.” Harford sadly made up his mind that the moment was not propitious, especially as Miller shortly joined him to finish his discourse on the sewers and drains, and Miss Mary was called back to accompany Miss Landon in a song called “Tahme Will Decahde.” Supper followed, and then De Vinney suggested that they should all join hands for “Auld Acquaintance” and “He’s a Jolly Good Fellow,” a ceremony in which Leigh was unwillingly forced to join, and which seemed to inflict upon him an inexpressible degree of





"SHE SEEMED SO LOVELY AND GRACIOUS"







bodily pain. After this the party broke up, the cousins humming "Sing again" and "Ain't she the dimply dear little dot?" as they gathered together their wraps in the hall.

That night Harford went to sleep with this refrain dinning in his ears:

"Sing it again—  
Sing of the drain;  
Sing of the nightingale,  
Sewer, and drain!"







THE RAILROAD HUMORIST







#### IV

OUR friend Harford was not especially addicted to early rising, and his trips to Starling and the return to town for business by the 7.38 special forced him to leave the Millers' at a particularly unearthly hour, often without his breakfast, and nearly always in a bad humor. In the course of these journeys, whether made in the cold blasts of January, when the door of the car refused to stay shut, or in the hottest days of July, when the windows refused to be opened, Harford noted with interest the unvarying and perhaps aggressive cheerfulness of the average daily commuter. A delay of half an hour was a source of gratifi-



cation; the hasty rush to the station of a belated suburban gave ground for merriment unrestrained. As these were incidents of frequent recurrence, Hartford wondered why they did not lose their novelty, and was finally led to consider more closely than he had done heretofore the traits of a group of fellow-passengers who may be described as the professional railroad humorists.

If a composite photograph could be taken of the master-workman in the band of humorists, it would picture a short, stout, florid man with a brownish beard; in age about forty-three; sharply marked crow's-feet about the eyes, indicating a constant tendency to laughter; heavy features, and large, protruding ears. Notwithstanding a bulkiness of frame, he is quick of movement. He is watchful of eye, ready of speech, and





OUR FRIEND HARFORD







his name is apt to be "Al" or "Lon." Harford observed that this important personage is always surrounded by a body of satellites who are quite content to shine only by reflected light, and who, with smiles frozen on their expectant faces, await patiently the point of the anecdote he happens to be narrating, or the gibe with which he is certain to receive an acquaintance late of coming. The followers of Lon, the 7.38 special humorist, were named respectively Ed, Will, Van Nort, and Stroudebush, and Harford noted that in other groups the types were similar, although the names may have differed. Ed and Will were ponderous individuals, with heavy black mustaches; Van Nort, elderly, with tan-colored face and white beard; and Stroudebush, pallid, light-haired and light-eyed, was decidedly the young-



est of the lot, and perhaps the most appreciative.

Lon was wont daily to rally Van Nort on the incorrectness of his watch, a point of humor which never failed of an immediate and hilarious response from the others of the party.

"Say, Van Nort, ain't that a new watch?" said Stroudebush, acting as runner-up for Lon.

"Where was the fire?" said Will.

"Where did you get the thing, anyhow?" from Ed.

"Why," said Lon, "everybody knows that Smith was advertising for that old tomato-can he lost the other day."

After the laughter subsides Van Nort taps Lon playfully on the cheek, and remarks, somewhat inconsequently,

"Shoo fly!"

Will adds, "T'roarer bum de ay!"





“SMITH WAS ADVERTISING FOR THAT OLD TOMATO-CAN”







But this does not seem to go very well, so he shoots his left arm from his shoulder, carries his hand to the back of his head, which he rubs for a moment, tilts his hat over his nose, laughs a little, and says, "Oh, pshaw!"

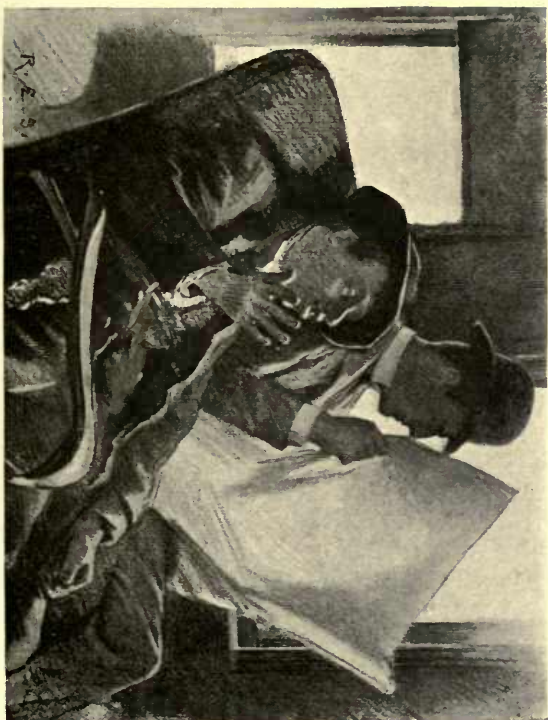
These proceedings were inexpressibly irritating to Harford, especially as he fancied that the time might come when he would be made the victim of their ill-directed horse-play. Once it happened that an Italian, rather the worse for liquor, took a seat beside him, and endeavored to engage him in conversation. The train was waiting at a station, and the hoarse gutturals of the son of Italy resounded through the silent car. Harford, who dreaded publicity and a scene, made every effort to maintain a dignified unconcern, but Lon and his followers noted the incident with bois-



terous expressions of joy, and Harford saw them signalling to a party of young men at the station, who in turn peered at him through the windows, and emphasized their appreciation of the joke by immoderate laughter and the execution of a few jig steps on the platform. The scene was becoming painful, and the hilarity of the humorists gradually increasing to the point of exhaustion, when, to Harford's relief, the train started, and his Italian friend dropped into a heavy slumber. This ended the incident, but Harford always fancied afterwards that Lon and his friends noted him as he passed, and that they engaged in surreptitious mirth at his expense, varied by occasional confidences about him to the newsboy or brakeman.

It was quite evident that to the rail-





“HARFORD MADE EVERY EFFORT TO MAINTAIN A DIGNIFIED UNCONCERN”







road humorist and his friends the train filled the place of the club or the theatre; but the extraordinary thing, Harford thought, was that there was never a break in their flow of spirits. At times the best of us is troubled in mind, our temper ruffled, our spirit vexed, but not so the gentleman of the Lon variety. Harford often noticed that the more vexatious a delay might be on the morning train, the merrier became the humorist, and the more responsive his friends. If a snow-storm blocked the way and the passengers were nearly frozen to death, Ed would playfully affect to mop the perspiration from his brow, and wellnigh explode with laughter over Lon's latest *bon-mot*. Certainly no club or theatre ever had a record of such continuous and complete enjoyment.



Another remarkable feature of this association of railway jokers is the effect that it exercises in levelling classes and obliterating social lines. In one of the groups which came under Harford's observation he noticed that the star was an unkempt, rather dirty individual, who might have been understudy for a stoker on a tug-boat, while associated with him were well-dressed, prosperous-looking men, who looked like bankers or merchants, or even Sons of the Revolution, for anything Harford could discover to the contrary; and this ill-assorted body hobnobbed together, hanging on the words of the seedy-looking person, and roaring over his quips with unfeigned enjoyment, while it is a curious paradox that neither he nor any of the professional railroad humorists was ever known to say anything really funny.



Harford noticed every morning when Lon and his friends first met that there was a moment, a brief moment, of seriousness, followed by peals of inextinguishable laughter. He ascertained that the proceedings opened with questions as to the state of the thermometer, and Van Nort was always suspected of exaggeration. The burst of merriment greeted Lon's remark that Van Nort kept his thermometer in the range in summer and in the ice-box in winter. This joke amused the crowd every day that Harford happened to notice them, and, so far as he knows, it is amusing them still.







MOMENTS WITH MECHANICS







## V

MRS. MILLER had taken the children away for a two weeks' visit to her old school-friend Julia Marsh; and Miller, after endless secret conferences with Uncle Chad, had determined upon some necessary improvements in the house and grounds as a surprise for his wife when she returned. A bow-window with a southwestern exposure had been agreed upon after much heated discussion, and there was something about the pipes in the laundry which had been exhaustively debated, but so far no satisfactory plan of action had been reached. There was also a little painting to be done, and a number of elaborate mos-



quito-bars and wire netting to be set up; but on this last point there was little or no discussion, because this is a tender point with the average suburban, who declines to admit the existence of mosquitoes, no matter how prevalent they may be next door or in the immediate neighborhood. The tennis-ground was also to be relaid, and various fence-posts about the farm (as a field at the back of the house was called) were to be strengthened or renewed. The carriage which took Mrs. Miller to the station was hardly out of sight when the telephone bell began to hum, and after that Uncle Chad, who was not a very successful operator on that instrument, could have been found at almost any hour of the day irritably shouting "Wha-a-t?" to Stolz the plumber, or calling Miss Mary to come down-stairs





“UNCLE CHAD, IRRITABLY SHOUTING ‘WH-A-T?’”







and help him out in a controversy with Sibley the carpenter, or some other mechanic in the village. That evening at dinner, when Miller returned from town, the spark of discussion which had so long smouldered in secret burst forth into a roaring flame, as one detail of construction after another was brought up, turned over, and generally rejected as faulty, unwise, or altogether impracticable. Miller was so convinced that Uncle Chad would, if left to himself, make some incorrigible blunder in his instructions to the workmen that he decided to give up business the next day and devote himself to laying down a definite line of action, as he expressed it. Uncle Chad was equally contemptuous of Miller's mechanical ability, but wisely concluded to say nothing, and to reserve himself for the conflict which he



felt sure would come on the morrow. Sibley the carpenter was the first to arrive, and with him descended the war-cloud which was to envelop the Miller household for weeks to follow.

"Sibley," said Miller, "I want to have a bow-window built here to project about three and a half feet, and it wants to be nine feet wide."

"No—eight and a half," broke in Uncle Chad.

"No, it doesn't," said Miller. "Here are the measurements we took on Friday, and don't you remember Ryan said we could get another six inches?"

"I don't care what Ryan said. He's an addle-pated fellow who always over-estimates, and when he made that window for Taylor—"

"Ryan never done that job for Taylor," said Sibley, running his eye along



the cornice reflectively. "I done it myself, and 'ain't got paid yet."

"How much did it cost—I mean what did it measure?" said Uncle Chad and Miller in chorus. Sibley couldn't just remember; he might if he had the plans with him, but of course he left 'em at the shop, not thinking they'd be needed, and—

"Well, Sibley," said Miller, starting over again, "I want a bow-window about nine feet wide—"

"Oh, bosh!" said Uncle Chad, very red in the face, and moving away from the group.

"About nine feet wide," Miller went on, "and the full height of the room. Window-seats with the tops opening with hinges, so that they can be used as boxes, and square panes of glass in the windows."



Uncle Chad, unable to keep away, had returned, and was drinking in every word.

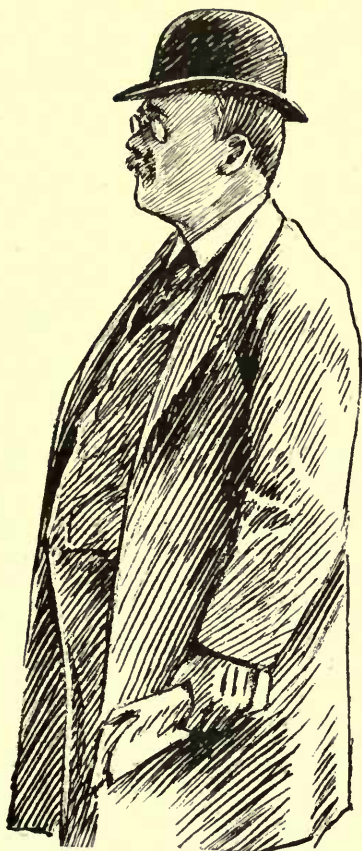
"What kind of glass do you want?" said Sibley.

"Square panes," from Uncle Chad.

"Well," from Sibley, "Howes's Brittle Egg-shell, or Pittsburg Rolled?"

Miller and Uncle Chad looked at each other helplessly, each unwilling to acknowledge that he was not posted on this branch of the subject. Miss Mary, who had joined the group, quietly suggested that they wanted the same kind of glass that Mrs. Abbott had in her new house. Sibley immediately understood this suggestion, and saying something about "Gumbert's Transparent," made a memorandum in a soiled leather-covered book. Uncle Chad, who was looking over his shoulder, noted that





“MILLER IS A CONVENTIONAL SUBURBAN”







the entry bore a strong resemblance to a physician's prescription.

"How do them colyums bear?" Sibley began.

"Well, they bear all right," said Miller, vaguely, but with a slight shade of indignation.

"'Cause if they chug over where the beams set, you couldn't— I don't know, though, but what you might get a job by startin' over towards the drum—"

"What drum?" said Uncle Chad, mopping his brow.

"Why, the drum the colyums sets on; at least, not what they sets on, but where that streak chugs in with the jamb."

At this juncture Uncle Chad withdrew and secretly looked up the word "chug" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, foreseeing that it was to play an impor-



tant part in the construction of the new window. He also consulted the *Century Dictionary* and Wilkes's *Thesaurus of the Vulgar Tongue*, but without success. Returning to the drawing-room, he found Miller and Sibley engaged in a sullen controversy about the details of the window, Sibley insisting that the job could not be carried out in the place indicated for various technical reasons, which Miller was unable to controvert.

"Other people have bow-windows in their houses," Miller insisted. "Why can't I have one?"

"'Cause the drum ain't right for it; and if you want a Selkirk window—do you want a Selkirk window?—and even if you had a Selkirk, you'd have mason-work enough to last you till Decoration Day, or longer, maybe."



"Well," said Uncle Chad, hopelessly, "is there any way of getting a bow-window anywhere in this house without tearing the house down and then putting up a Selkirk, or whatever you call it, and then building another house around it?"

"Not with them plans you got there," said Sibley. "Not, leastways, unless you change 'em so's they won't bulge on the drum."

"Couldn't you chug that over?" suggested Uncle Chad, diplomatically.

"Why, yes," said Sibley, a light breaking in gradually. "Yes, sir, you could chug it over an inch and a half or two inches beyond this wainskirting" (taking out a foot-rule and measuring rapidly). "That would make the window eight feet six."

"That's what I always told you," said



Uncle Chad, triumphantly, to Miller. "All you have to do is to chug it over, and make the window eight feet six."

"Well, I don't believe in that policy myself," Miller replied, somewhat crest-fallen, but he had no alternative but to comply. "How much will it cost?" he asked.

"Well, the stuff is runnin' kinder high just now. Would you want it plumb sealed with oak and Jericho plaster?"

"Well, no," said Miller, groping for a reply. "I don't think we need Jericho plaster. What other kind could you suggest?"

"There's Small's satin-edge, but you wouldn't want that. Might just as well put mud on your walls. Sucks in rain like a sponge."

"I rather like the effect of Jericho,"



said Uncle Chad, knowingly. And perhaps with some desire of overruling Miller, he added, "If it costs a little more I will pay it myself."

"Yes," said Sibley, "you wouldn't be satisfied with anything but Jericho. It'll cost you about \$4 50 more—\$4 50 to \$4 75. Oh, let's see!" he went on, rubbing the edge of his thumb along the wall, "how does them studs run?"

Uncle Chad, rather flushed with success over the result of the Jericho controversy, hazarded a reply, which betrayed so little knowledge of even the general direction of the studs that Sibley had to turn away snickering, and Miller thought he would regain lost ground by asserting that they ran up and down.

"Well, of course they run up and down," said Sibley. "I was wondering



how far apart they was." Then to Uncle Chad: "I guess you ain't in the way of doin' much carpenter-work, sir."

Uncle Chad turned away glowering, and was ruminating on the best means of overcoming this sudden reversal of fortune, when the door-bell rang and three persons were announced—Mrs. Colonel Atterbury, wife of the local magnate of Starling; Harford, for one of his periodical visits; and Stolz the plumber. Uncle Chad, upset and confused, introduced Mrs. Atterbury to Stolz, and then was further humiliated by Miller, who explained suavely that his uncle was somewhat excited, and they must not mind what he said. Mrs. Atterbury, finding that Mrs. Miller was absent, exchanged a few remarks with Miss Mary as to the unfitness of the road commissioners, and then, after





“HOW DOES THEM STUDS RUN?”







glancing critically at Harford (as every suburban surveys a new-comer), swept away in her large old-fashioned barouche, leaving the combatants still on the field.

Harford busied himself moving furniture and taking down pictures, while Miss Mary sewed the curtains for the new window, and the others took their way to the cellar and then to the attic, the two mechanics talking together in a strange jargon, and suggesting plans for pipes which upset all of Miller's preconceived ideas. Stolz the plumber was a more accommodating and tactful person than Sibley the carpenter, but very vague on the subject of money, his favorite expression being that the job might cost eight dollars and it might cost eighty; you couldn't tell till you got at it.



When the work was finally started Harford began to fear that Uncle Chad would go off in a fit of apoplexy. The carpenters arrived about three days after the appointed time, and then spent several days more sitting on the piazza, waiting, as they explained it, for the stuff. When the stuff at last arrived the carpenters were away, and did not turn up again for several days more. Then Uncle Chad was awakened one morning shortly after six by the plumber, who explained to him that *he* couldn't do anything till the others got out—a statement which so exasperated Uncle Chad that he ordered the man out of the house, and thus delayed the work for several days longer. The difficulty was finally patched up by Miss Mary, but a charge of \$57 27 was eventually added to the bill for wastage,





"MISS MARY SEWED THE CURTAINS FOR THE NEW WINDOW"







truckage, and other items which were not decipherable.

Another grievance of Uncle Chad's, which he was compelled to endure in silence, was the presence of the plumber's assistant, who spent most of his time lying flat on his back under a torn-up floor, apparently doing nothing in the way of work but lighting and blowing out a small piece of candle, while he hummed a discordant version of "Molly and I and the Baby." The workmen, urged by Uncle Chad's threats and Miller's persuasions, succeeded in finishing most of the alterations on the morning of the day set for Mrs. Miller's return, and all hands had fallen to in an effort to clean up things before 4.38, when Brisbane was to bring her down from the station. Two hours before that time, Uncle Chad, very red



in the face, was sweeping up shavings in the drawing-room, Harford was standing on a chair tacking up curtains under Miss Mary's supervision, and Miller was making superhuman efforts to crowd a cabinet into an alcove which the carpenters had made about half an inch too narrow, when, to the dismay of all, Mrs. Miller herself entered, having come by an earlier train. She surveyed the alterations with a judicial air, and though she praised everything without stint, the expression of her eye betrayed a qualified approval. The next day, when Miller was called away to attend a convention of the "Workers for better Drainage," she quietly summoned Sibley and Stolz, and had radical changes made in all of Miller's most cherished improvements. This gave Uncle Chad such unalloyed satisfaction



that he took Miss Mary and Harford to the theatre for three nights running, and sent a check for \$1 50 to the Starling Lyceum Building Fund.







VILLAGE THEATRICALS







## VI

A LARGE square card with gilt edges, directed to Mr. Miller, Esq., and family, was received one morning, announcing that tableaux, recitals, and a hop would be given at the village hall on the evening of the 17th, for the benefit of the Starling Volunteer Hook and Ladder Company, and a few days later De Vinney turned up with a request that Miss Mary should do something in the way of helping along the entertainment. "It's going to be a great evening," said De Vinney, "but we've had trouble settling on just the right kind of a show. Now my partner, Eddy, is a fine man in respect of business, but when you get



him down to anything in the social line he's worse than the cholera. He wanted to have hog-guessing and climbing the greased pole in the afternoon, and a grab-bag in the evening, but I told him that would never do. Why, even down at Chestnut Place they had a smoking concert, and if Starling can't beat Chestnut Place on an entertainment, why I guess we'd better sell out. The trouble with Eddy is he's nothing more than a farmer. He's been acting mean right through." Miss Mary was sorry there had been any friction, but hoped it could all be smoothed over and arranged before the evening of the performance. "Well, I guess it can," De Vinney went on. "There's been a committee formed on plan and scope, made up of the best men in town, if I do say it. I'm chairman and treasurer;



then there's Will Thorp, old man Drinkwater, Cal Ebbitt, Burt Runnels, and Joe Brautigam. He's the one that plays the concertina, or 'most any other instrument, for that matter. Ever hear him imitate a ferry-boat coming into the slip, Miss Mary? No? Well, you'd think for all the world it was the real thing. Now what we want you to do is to get up about two tableaux for us. We've got a good show—first-class—and Joe Brautigam will keep 'em laughing till they can't rest, but we want a little dignity kinder infused into it. We want something solid—more meat, as you might say." Then he added, confidentially: "More *recherché*. As for Chestnut Place, we can likely do them up without trying; and when they talk about their smoking concert, I guess the old stove in our hall will



give 'em all the smoke they want " (he laughed immoderately at this sally); "but we want to make it a cyclone—something they couldn't do better in New York, or—or"—he continued—"or even Brooklyn." After some discussion about the details, Miss Mary finally promised to arrange the Greek tableaux, which she said had been very successful at Mrs. Marsh's in town, and De Vinney hurried off in triumph to tell his colleagues on the plan-and-scope committee of his success. Miller, who was an associate member of the fire company, took an active interest in all the details of preparation, and in view of the fact that he proposed to run for supervisor at the spring elections, he sent an order for twenty-five tickets, and offered a prize of two dollars to the person who should sell the greatest number



up to twelve o'clock on the day of the performance. The prize was won by Joe Brautigam, who was subsequently Miller's opponent as candidate for supervisor, and who carried the election by an overwhelming majority.

Miller, however, who could not have foreseen this disastrous outcome of his plans, spent nearly all his spare time at the hall pushing around the two sets of scenery in a vain attempt to arrange effective combinations. It was a difficult task, as one set represented a snow scene and the other a dismal interior, which did duty both as a library and a dungeon. Miller, although he would not confess it, was to a great extent stimulated to action by a desire, which he shared with De Vinney, to down Chestnut Place, whose recent sudden rise in real estate was galling in the ex-



treme. Consequently on the evening of the show he urged the different members of the family and the guests to appear in evening dress, a custom which did not extensively prevail at Starling entertainments, but which Miller insisted was necessary in order to make a good appearance with the town people. The real secret of this manœuvre was to impress Chestnut Place, because the Lawn Club were beginning to congregate there, and the smoking concert had attracted some of the social lions of the place.

Miller was anxious to show that Starling could be up to date quite as well as other localities. After dinner the party were taken in Brisbane's stage to the hall, an isolated wooden edifice on Prospect Avenue, where Miller owned some lots. Uncle Chad, who had strongly



disapproved of Miller's investments in that particular spot, whispered to Harford that Miller had had the place christened Prospect Avenue, although there was no prospect and no avenue, and no prospect of there ever being an avenue.

Entering the hall, Miller regretted that he had expended so much time on the scenery and sale of tickets, and had neglected to look over the programme, the general character of the entertainment having been left in charge of the plan-and-scope committee. Miller was pained to observe suppressed tittering among the Lawn Club party as De Vinney appeared at the door attired in his frock-coat and blue trousers, and wearing a large fireman's helmet with "Foreman" inscribed in front in shiny white letters. He welcomed the newly arrived guests with effusion, introduced them



all to Eddy, Brautigam, and the others, and then conducted them with much ceremony to seats in the first two rows.

To add to Miller's confusion, the committee, without his knowledge or sanction, had placed on the curtain a large blue banner on which were inscribed the words "Starling H. & L. Co. Welcome. Tickets, 50 cents." And at various points on the wall were pink paper rosettes from which depended pasteboard placards bearing mottoes such as, "Ever Ready," "Watchful while Others Sleep," "On Time," and various statistical items of houses saved from destruction by fire during the past year.

From the rail of the little gallery at the rear of the hall hung a large solar print of De Vinney in his uniform as foreman of the brigade. Miller, however, in spite of these drawbacks, in-





From E. Sherwood.

"MILLER WAS PAINED TO OBSERVE SUPPRESSED TITTLING"







wardly determined to maintain a bold front, and smilingly remarked to his Lawn Club friends that the good people of the village had contrived to make things look pretty cheerful, a statement which drove Uncle Chad into a paroxysm of laughter in his handkerchief, ending in a violent fit of coughing.

The curtain rose, as De Vinney afterward pointed out with pardonable pride, exactly on time for the first tableau—the marriage of Captain John Smith and Pocahontas, with the following cast of characters: Captain John Smith, Dr. S. F. Grew; Pocahontas, Mrs. J. Brautigam; Clergyman, Cal Ebbitt; Indians, soldiers, settlers, and others. Dr. Grew was a mild, studious person, crestfallen and abashed in demeanor, who had been persuaded by his wife, a lady of marked social aspirations, to take



part in the programme. His costume comprised a brown Heidelberg hat with a feather, a heliotrope plush cape, the property of his wife, and a large, limp, Pierrot-like ruffle about his neck. Like Strephon in "Iolanthe," Dr. Grew was a fairy only down to the waist, as historical accuracy had not been attempted in his nether garments, which consisted of black-and-gray trousers tucked into a pair of rubber boots.

Mrs. Brautigam, who represented Pocahontas, was a stout, portly lady, tightly laced, whose portrayal of the character was perhaps a shade too suggestive of roguery and coquetry to fulfil one's ideal of a simple child of the primeval forest. After the applause had subsided the Starling cornet band gave a selection entitled "The Woodland Echo," in which the leader, secreted in the box-





CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH







office, represented the Echo, always coming in a little too soon or a little too late. Then the curtain rose again for a recitation by De Vinney of "Horatius on the Bridge." De Vinney, who stood beside a small black desk on which were a pitcher of ice-water and a glass, was attired in his ordinary costume, except that he had wrapped about his shoulders a leopard-skin rug, which he had borrowed somewhere, and which gave out a strong odor of mothalline. Then followed Miss Mary's tableau. She had carefully drilled some of the better-looking boys and girls of the neighborhood in classic attitudes, and with the help of some cheese-cloth and blossoming boughs had arranged a charming frieze, which was rapturously applauded.

It was hard for Starling to realize that the poetic shepherd lad in the fore-



ground, in straw-colored chiton and sandals, playing on pan-pipes, was Willie Nolan, the little ragamuffin who brought round the morning papers, and whose straight nose and level brows had always excited Miss Mary's admiration. The next number on the programme was evidently regarded by the Starlingites as the *pièce de résistance* of the evening. This was Joe Brautigam in his comic recitations. First came the world-famed representation of a ferry-boat entering the slip; then the soda fountain of De Vinney & Eddy's store, which received a triple encore, and afterwards the cat-fight, the buzz-saw, the newsboy on the 7.13 train, and the negro surprised by the farmer while robbing the hen-roost. Then followed a duet, entitled "Two Woodland Sprites are We," rendered by Miss Abeel, soprano of





"TWO WOODLAND SPRITES ARE WE"







the village choir, and Mrs. Shoonmaker, contralto. Then more tableaux, of which the most successful were, "Washington Crossing the Delaware," with Dr. Grew as Washington; the "Puritan Lovers," by Mr. and Mrs. Cal Ebbitt; "Faith, Hope, and Charity," by Mrs. Drinkwater, Miss Abeel, and Miss Runnels; the "Dawn of Liberty," with Mrs. Brautigam as Columbia; and a grand final allegory, entitled "Honor to Our Firemen," by De Vinney and the entire company.

After this the floor was cleared for dancing, and Miller, noticing that the Lawn Club set were gathered in a little knot in one corner of the room, endeavoring to conceal their amusement behind fans and handkerchiefs, proceeded, with a great show of merriment, to marshal them about and introduce them to



various of the local lights for the set of lancers which was just forming. This was rather a funereal performance, in which all concerned moved about slowly, as if actuated by a stern sense of duty; and little Tommy Mason, who had been trying to make himself agreeable to Mrs. Cal Ebbitt, the heroine of the "Puritan Lovers" tableau, when offering her his arm at the end of the dance, was somewhat staggered by her remarking, "Please to escort me to my husband." Mason, after this rebuff, drifted over towards Miss Abeel, who, in reply to a query whether she were enjoying the entertainment, said stoically that she was very practical; that she enjoyed what she *had* to enjoy. But later he received a genuine welcome from Mrs. Joe Brautigam, who, after the ceremonies of introduction, offered him half of her chair,



and asked him if he wasn't ashamed of himself to be so handsome.

About this time the Lawn Club people began to drift away, and, freed from the incubus of their presence, the Starlingites gave themselves over to the enjoyment of the occasion. At Uncle Chad's request three colored musicians—two violins and a guitar—were sent for. These had formerly been the only performers of dance music in Starling, but had lately been superseded by the cornet band, and were at present decidedly unfashionable. They hastily tuned their instruments and broke into a wild, old-fashioned quadrille, the first violin acting as director of the dance. This was hugely enjoyed by Miss Mary, Harford, Uncle Chad, Mason, and Mrs. Brautigam, who found themselves in the same set; but Miller was unable to fol-



low the intricacies of the figures which were shouted by the fiddler, such as "Allymand left," "Dozy ballanade," "First gentleman counterfeit to the right," etc.; and after struggling for a while under the critical eye of Uncle Chad, he was compelled to withdraw in the middle of the dance.

"Well," said Miller, as they were driving home, "that wasn't such a bad entertainment, was it, Harford?" "Not bad at all," Harford answered, heartily; "very good fun;" and he had undoubtedly enjoyed it, as he had been at Miss Mary's elbow during the entire evening.

"Well," interposed Uncle Chad, "it was not bad if you don't mind what you say; but let me tell you, Edward, my boy, you will never sell any lots on Prospect Avenue on the strength of that performance. Why, all those Lawn Club





“ASKED HIM IF HE WASN'T ASHAMED OF HIMSELF TO BE  
SO HANDSOME”







people were nearly laughing themselves to death, and—”

“’Sh! Uncle Chad; never mind,” from Mrs. Miller and Miss Mary; but Uncle Chad refused to be silent, and continued to twit Miller for the rest of the drive. Two weeks later Miller disposed of his Prospect Avenue property at a considerable sacrifice, and thereafter no one was more bitter than he in denunciations of the locality. “Hot as a furnace in summer,” he explained to Harford, “cold in winter; low, marshy land, unhealthy and undesirable in every particular,” and for once Uncle Chad entirely agreed with him.







THE PROFESSOR







## VII

As an amateur photographer Mr. Miller was a pronounced success. His apparatus was the envy of all the other amateurs of Starling, and he had even invented a new preparation of toning solution, unrivalled in its results. Like many other photographers, Miller, in his striving after technical excellence and professional accuracy, overlooked and neglected many artistic possibilities in his plates. Clearness and sharpness of definition were his avowed aims, and in his photographs every hair and every blade of grass must stand out as they never did in nature. Miss Mary's room was adorned with various photo-



graphs of the children and of little bits of landscape where charming atmospheric effects had been arrived at through some happy accident of under or over exposure or some faulty adjustment of focus. But Miller's professional pride would not tolerate these failures, as he called them, and after Miss Mary had surreptitiously secured her prints the plates were destroyed. For a long time the unstinted admiration of his family and neighbors, and the consciousness of his own success, were enough for Mr. Miller's encouragement along the paths of art, but at last he began to long for a wider recognition, and made up his mind to compete for a prize offered by the Amateur Photographic Union.

For some weeks before the competition the household at Starling was in a



condition of chaos. Mrs. Miller's linen-closet was rifled of its contents, and sheets and table-cloths for reflected lights were hung about the drawing-room piazza and library. The coat-closet was turned into a dark-room, and not infrequently chemical fluids were dropped on Uncle Chad's umbrella or into his overshoes. Mr. Miller, after weeks of anxious thought and experiment, had at last decided on an outdoor classical subject, and in order to insure absolute accuracy of detail he invited his old college chum, Professor Elmer E. Judd, instructor in *belles-lettres* at Little Falls University, and his cousin, Miss Lavinia Miller, an art student, to spend a few days and confer with him on points of light, grouping, costume, and classic composition.

Professor Judd, or "Prof.," as Miller



usually called him—was rather a seedy person, whose knowledge covered a wide range. He could talk with equal readiness about extinct volcanoes or the most approved system of ensilage; he dabbled a little in water-colors, took a flier once in a while in gold-mines, held theories on occultism and theosophy, argued with equal readiness on protection or free trade, and criticised with hair-splitting exactness the strong or weak points of every book that was ever published. Miller held his friend Judd in profound admiration, but he was a thorn in the side of Uncle Chad, principally because he was disposed to cavil at existence on this planet, holding that nature generally was a huge mistake, while Uncle Chad took a straightforward, wholesome view of life. Then, too, Judd had a way of downing



Uncle Chad at various games of cards and mild athletic contests, which the old gentleman found peculiarly exasperating.

Harford arrived at Starling early one Saturday afternoon, and finding the Miller household deserted, was directed by the gardener to a wood about half a mile away, where, the gardener stated, "the folks was gettin' their pictures took."

Harford set out on foot for the place indicated, and, taking a short-cut and breaking through some underbrush, suddenly found himself in a sunlit wood and face to face with Miss Mary, who was seated on a mossy ledge of rock, dressed in severely classic draperies that were admirably becoming, and holding over her head an elaborate white parasol. At a little distance Mr. Miller, in his shirt-sleeves, assisted by



Professor Judd, was setting up the camera, while they carried on a lively discussion with Miss Lavinia Miller about the composition of the picture. Miss Miller was of the opinion that the classic was played out. "If," said she, "you would pose Mary in the potato-field over there, in the left-hand foreground of the picture, dressed in her new French dress, with that far-away look in her eyes, and Nathan's barn in the background, and just that one stylish little bare sapling in the very middle of the picture, you would have something really stunning and modern." At this point Miss Lavinia was interrupted by Mrs. Miller, who introduced Mr. Harford to her. She was immediately seized with violent admiration for the lines of his brow and nose, and told him so with gushing frankness.





"MISS MARY LEANED BACK EXHAUSTED AMONG THE SOFA CUSHIONS."







"Oh, oh!" said she, "we must have it classic, after all, and Mr. Harford must be the young Alcibiades. Think of having that Phidian nose drop in on us like a ray of light!"

Judd: "Now it's all very well about the Phidian nose, but the ray of light is a very different matter. Hagedorn, in those commentaries of his on light (Hagedorn calls them commentaries, but I call them commercialisms, because they were spoken and written to sell, not to read)—Hagedorn says in effect that light on the human profile is a clarified type of the beauty of life; but Mendham, the incomparable, the supreme, shows how meaningless, how dreary, how vacuous, is such a theory."

Uncle Chad: "Who is Mendham?"

Judd: "Who is Mendham? You might as well ask who is Ctesiphon, or



Lopez, or Severance. Who is Gannett, or Bignetti, or Bolles?"

Uncle Chad: "Well, what does Mendham have to say on the nose question?"

Judd: "Why, Mendham proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that there is no light and no beauty; hence there can be no combination of the two."

Uncle Chad: "Rubbish! And does he prove there is no nose?"

Mrs. Miller: "Oh, never mind, Uncle Chad; it's getting late, and the children must get back in time for their supper. Lavinia, my dear, what do you want Mr. Harford to do?" (*Harford had meanwhile strolled away with Miss Mary, under the pretext of finding some more flowering bushes for garlands.*)

Miss Miller (*shouting*): "Come back, Mr. Harford, come back! We can't al-



low you to escape in this way. Come back, and bring your nose with you. We can never take the prize unless we have you in this group." (*Harford and Miss Mary slowly return and rejoin the others.*) "Here is a Greek dress that Mr. Cressy the artist loaned me—chiton, himation, sandals, and everything."

Judd (*critically examining the draperies*): "Not a bad texture, but the warp of the Greek weaving was undoubtedly a very different thing."

Miss Miller: "Oh, well, we won't bother about the warp; the effect is all right. Now, Mr. Harford, you must go to Nathan's barn and put these on, and Mr. Chadwick will help you."

Uncle Chad emphatically declined, assuring them that he did not know the right side from the wrong, nor which was the top of the things and which the



bottom. Harford protested that, never having been accustomed to himations, he should feel and look like a fool in one, and with great difficulty persuaded Miss Miller to let him off. Mrs. Miller, who had partly undressed the children and taken off their shoes and stockings, to have them ready for posing, and who was holding them both in her capacious motherly lap, here lost patience, and said that something must be done at once, before the children caught dreadful colds. After this the scene of confusion was indescribable. Harford could offer no help, except in the way of occasionally passing a plate-holder from the trembling and excited Miller to Professor Judd, or getting a stone to prop up one of the legs of the camera.

At last Miss Mary and the children and the blossoms were arranged to ev-





Rosina E. Sherwood.

"DEEPLY INTERESTED IN HER SKETCH"







everybody's satisfaction, and Miss Lavinia Miller had given the last touch to the drapery. But the children were tired and Miller was nervous, and it took all Miss Mary's good temper and tact to save the situation; but save it she did, and after several disheartening failures and rearrangements of poses and draperies, they got three excellent exposures. As there was one plate left, some one suggested a group, and Professor Judd said he would arrange it.

Judd: "Now, Miss Burnham, will you sit on the end of that beech log and turn your face away from the camera?"

Miller: "I think you are wrong there, Prof. Mary ought to be looking directly at the camera."

Judd: "Wrong? Not a bit of it. Young women, to quote Mendham again, should never appear in portraiture other



than with averted face, for youth cannot bear to gaze full at the grim complexities of later life. Mr. Harford may have a profile view, as Miss Lavinia suggests. Mr. Chadwick, you, as the veteran of the party, will kindly look straight before you. You know what life is."

Uncle Chad: "I do, and I've managed to enjoy it, too."

Judd (*disregarding him*): "Now, then, all ready?"

Miller: "Oh, wait a moment—wait! I forgot to put in the plate."

Uncle Chad (*sarcastically*): "That's rather a serious omission."

Miss Mary: "Never mind, Uncle Chad; it only takes a moment."

Judd (*dreamily*): "Yes, but a moment is history, my dear Miss Burnham, and history is mystery. Strange as it may



seem to the casual thinker, the past is deeper hidden than the future."

Uncle Chad: "How do you work that out?"

Judd: "By geometry, my dear sir, which is the only lasting truth, and by Niedlinger, who is the only true geometrician. Niedlinger's geometrical allusions are nothing like as spicy as Beal's; they don't bite; but at the same time he enters very keenly into the metaphysics of the geometric axioms. Now, then, all ready?"

The plate was properly adjusted this time, and Miller was just about to squeeze the bulb when Miss Lavinia shrieked, "Wait!" and made a dash at Harford, as she said, to push his nose a little nearer to the afternoon sun.

This interruption demoralized the group. The children turned around to



stare at Harford, and Uncle Chad threw both legs entirely out of focus. After a time, however, quiet was restored, and Miller secured what he called a good definition. Then the party started for home by the short-cut across the road; but Miss Mary, who looked, as Harford thought, a dream of beauty, with her classic dress partly covered by a light shawl, thought she had better go by the wood path. Of course, at this hour they were not likely to meet any one but Brisbane going to the train, or possibly De Vinney on his bicycle, but she did not want to startle even them. Harford welcomed this suggestion, which would have so admirably suited his own plans, had not those plans been brought to naught by Miss Miller, who followed them with a kodak, and kept dashing out from behind bushes to catch snap-



“PROFESSOR JUDD WAS TRYING TO HYPNOTIZE MISS MARY”









shot views of his nose. When they got home Mrs. Miller dispensed tea on the cool, shaded piazza; and Miss Mary, after changing her dress, leaned back exhausted among the sofa cushions, while Harford, cup in hand, sank contentedly in a comfortable chair near by.

At this juncture Miss Lavinia Miller, brisk and energetic, and carrying a sketching - block and crayons, rushed into the room and implored Harford to pose for her. She had to illustrate something for a Western paper, and he was just what she wanted for the hero. Harford consented, and stood with one foot upon a chair lighting a cigarette until dinner-time.

Miss Miller became deeply interested in her sketch, and after dinner begged for half an hour more. Harford felt that he must be obliging, to make up



for his refusal to wear a himation, so he posed again, still in the act of lighting a cigarette, and wishing that he might be allowed to smoke it. He was extremely uncomfortable, and was vexed in spirit because Professor Judd was trying to hypnotize Miss Mary—an operation which obliged him to pass his hands many times over her saintly brow.

Later in the evening Miller emerged from the dark-room, flushed, dishevelled, and smiling, and announced that he thought he had secured a prize-winner. The picture was duly finished and printed, and was christened "The Feast of Flora." Mrs. Miller was not entirely satisfied with it, because it did not show enough of little Jack's face, but every one else was enthusiastic; and after about two weeks of suspense Miller



received word from the Photographic Union that he had taken first prize for definition, arrangement of lights, grouping, and general artistic excellence.







THE LAWN-TENNIS MATCH







## VIII

STARLING was all agog over the prospects of a tennis-match in which some of the third-rate players in one of the first-class matches had promised to compete. Miller, with ill-suppressed excitement, had confided to Bolles, the insurance man, that Gerrish—Gerrish, you know, who was runner-up at the Willowdale tournament—had entered his name, and there was a prospect that they might get Hoag, the Western crack, although this was doubtful, as Hoag might have to go back to Lake Minnetonka for the All-Comers. In any event, they were sure of Meredith, Ackerman, Smith, Sproull of Fall



River, young McNaught, etc. Miller said he didn't believe that any place outside of Newport or Tuxedo could show up any such list of names as that. Bolles, who was vice-president and general manager of the Mapleside Playground Sodality, where the matches were to be played, rushed off to communicate the news to the editor of the *Clarion*, and soon all Starling was alive with enthusiasm, from Centre Street to Locust Row. Harford had been invited to spend the night at the Millers' and go to the match, and perhaps for the twentieth time he resolved to ask the fateful question which should make or mar his destinies.

It was a beautiful September afternoon, and Harford was hoping that he would have a chance for a quiet walk with Miss Mary to the grounds, which



were about a mile and a half distant. He walked slowly up and down the piazza, trying to calm himself, while Miller was bustling about, making hurried trips to the stable, and wrangling with the coachman as to whether the stable clock was not two minutes fast by railroad time. Mrs. Miller moved calmly about among a throng of shouting children, each one clamoring to sit up in front with John or to hold the whip. When they were at last sorted out and seated in the carriage, Miss Mary appeared at the door, smiling, and buttoning her glove, and exclaiming on the beauty of the day—so perfect for a long, brisk walk. At this point Harford was appalled by a wail from the children in the carriage: “Oh, I want to walk with Aunt Mary! Ple-e-ease, mamma, can’t I walk with Aunt Mary?” And after



much discussion and arrangement and rearrangement it was finally decided that little Jack and Marian and one of the young cousins, Russell Burnham, should walk with Miss Mary and Harford.

This unexpectedly depressing turn in affairs so disconcerted Harford for a time that he could neither think nor speak; but after a little, under the influence of the cool, clear air and Miss Mary's dancing eyes and brilliant color, his good spirits began to return, and he found himself good-humoredly answering the questions of the children, who hung about his coat-tails or walked backward directly in front of him, anxious to catch every word of the conversation.

"Were you strong when you were at college, Mr. Harford?"





“WATCHING THE GAME WITH INTENSE INTEREST”







Oh, he didn't remember that he was especially strong; so so—about the average.

“What was the last record for high jumping?”

Harford hazarded a guess, but was immediately floored by young Russell Burnham, who gave the correct figures within a fraction of an inch.

“Did you ever play ball any?” Now this was rather a tender point with Harford, and he launched out into a protracted tale, which, it must be confessed, was rather tedious, as to how he had been left off the university nine because the captain wanted to put one of his own friends in, and the man had never made a very brilliant record, and he thought afterwards that the captain had always regretted it; but since then he and the captain had been very good



friends, and perhaps the captain should not be blamed for his share in the matter, etc.

The children, after listening with rapt interest to this thrilling narrative, unanimously expressed a desire that Harford should throw a tennis-ball for them—"like you used to throw from centre field into home." Now here was an opening, Harford thought, for his declaration to Miss Mary. He must be brief and concise, and she must be quick of response, but why not make a try for it? So, taking the tennis-ball, he hurled it with all his strength and skill over the fences into a distant field, and then started all the children running after it. Miss Mary laughed, and urged them on in the race. "Now," thought Harford, "now is my time, if I can only think how to tell her."



“Have you ever seen Gerrish play?” said Miss Mary.

“Er—yes,” he answered, huskily. “Er—Miss Mary, I often—”

“I never saw anything so graceful as those backhand drives of his down the side of the court. Isn’t it wonderful the way he does it?”

“Yes, very; but I was just thinking, Miss Mary—I have been hoping—”

And at this juncture there was a sharp ringing of a bicycle bell just behind them, and, turning about, they saw De Vinney, bent over like an attenuated wasp, and ploughing away on the pedals with dismal earnestness. And then the children joined them again, laughing and panting, and Harford had to give it up; but he fancied he saw a changed expression in Miss Mary’s eyes as she glanced towards him, and it made



him cheerfully buoyant for the rest of the day, in spite of De Vinney's unwelcome companionship.

"Good - afternoon, Miss Mary. Mr. Harford, good - day," said De Vinney, moving slowly along beside them. "Elegant afternoon for the tournament, and a great day for Starling. Lyndhurst's been trying to get those first-class players every day for the last two weeks, but they ain't in it, as the feller says—they ain't in it with Starling. Biggest crowd, I guess, they ever had on the Sodality grounds. I counted seventeen strangers myself that came up on the 2.04, and Brisbane's just gone back for his sixth load. Tennis-player yourself, Mr. Harford?" Harford admitted that he took up a racquet once in a while, and Miss Mary added: "Yes, Mr. Harford is a beautiful player. I am quite sure





LAWN-TENNIS







he would be among the first at Newport if he ever had time to practise."

"Well, it must be a scientific pastime, but it is one in which I have never had leisure to participate," said De Vinney, rather with the air of a Fourth-of-July oration. So they walked on and talked, and De Vinney entertained them with a variety of local anecdotes, until they reached the tennis-ground, where all was bustle and excitement.

It was a pretty place, with a smooth lawn, and a little club-house and stand at one end of the field, where were gathered together the good people of Starling, talking briskly, and congratulating one another on the attractiveness of their town as this or that celebrity drove up from the Lawn Club or from the various country places about the neighborhood.



Miller and Bolles were here, there, and everywhere, making energetic but hopeless attempts to get the carriages in a line heading south, and distributing programmes, comparing watches, and holding solemn conferences, which seldom seemed to result in effective action.

Mr. T. S. Johnstone Leigh drove Miss Landon from the Lawn Club in a smart-looking trap, and succeeded in throwing Miller into a whirlwind of confusion by directing his groom to take the horses to a part of the field which Miller said should be kept clear in case of fire in the club-house. The engines never could get through, Miller explained, if that particular spot were blocked. Miller argued for some time with the groom, who stolidly declined to stir, on the ground that 'e 'ad 'is horders, sir; and



he was received by Leigh with a murmured ejaculation of "Oh, rot!" when he made an attempt to show him a type-written set of rules and regulations. Leigh declined to even glance at them, and without changing expression he moved slowly away, lit an Al Raschid cigarette, and stood aloof and motionless, except when he took a lazy puff from the cigarette. He was presently joined by Billy Merriam, a sturdy, smooth-shaven, ruddy-cheeked young man, perfectly dressed, and a past-master in the art of slang.

"Hullo, Leigh, old sport!" said Merriam. "You seem to be lost in a Staffordshire trance. What's worryin' you?"

Leigh murmured something uncomplimentary about Miller, and then asked Merriam whether he would liquor. They went to the club-house, and Leigh



ordered brandy-and-soda, while Merriam asked for a little plain goods and H<sub>2</sub>O.

“What?” said he — “don’t understand? Why, whiskey-and-water, of course; and make it light, because I’m attached to a party of fairies on the grounds, and I don’t want to get too attractive before sunset. Well, English, here’s at you!” And Merriam took his tippie, and hurried back to the games in time for the first round of the finals between Gerrish and young McNaught.

In the meantime Harford and the Miller party had secured good places near the principal court, and were watching the game with intense interest. De Vinney hovered about, asking questions about the players, and cheering frequently at inopportune moments, as he ex-





"LEIGH LIT AN AL RASCHID CIGARETTE"







plained, "for the honor of Starling, and to keep things moving."

Merriam whispered to Harford that if that jay in the bicycle suit didn't take a fall out of himself the town militia would have to be called out, and Leigh would probably go back to England for good.

The finals were intensely exciting, and when young McNaught pulled out the last game with a tremendous back-hand stroke down the side line, even Leigh forgot himself for a moment, and gave a loud "Whoo-oo-hoop!" while Billy Merriam, who had won ten dollars on the result, executed a song-and-dance, as he described it, on the piazza of the club-house, and Uncle Chad shouted himself hoarse. After the games there was a wild rush for the stages and other vehicles, which Miller had gathered



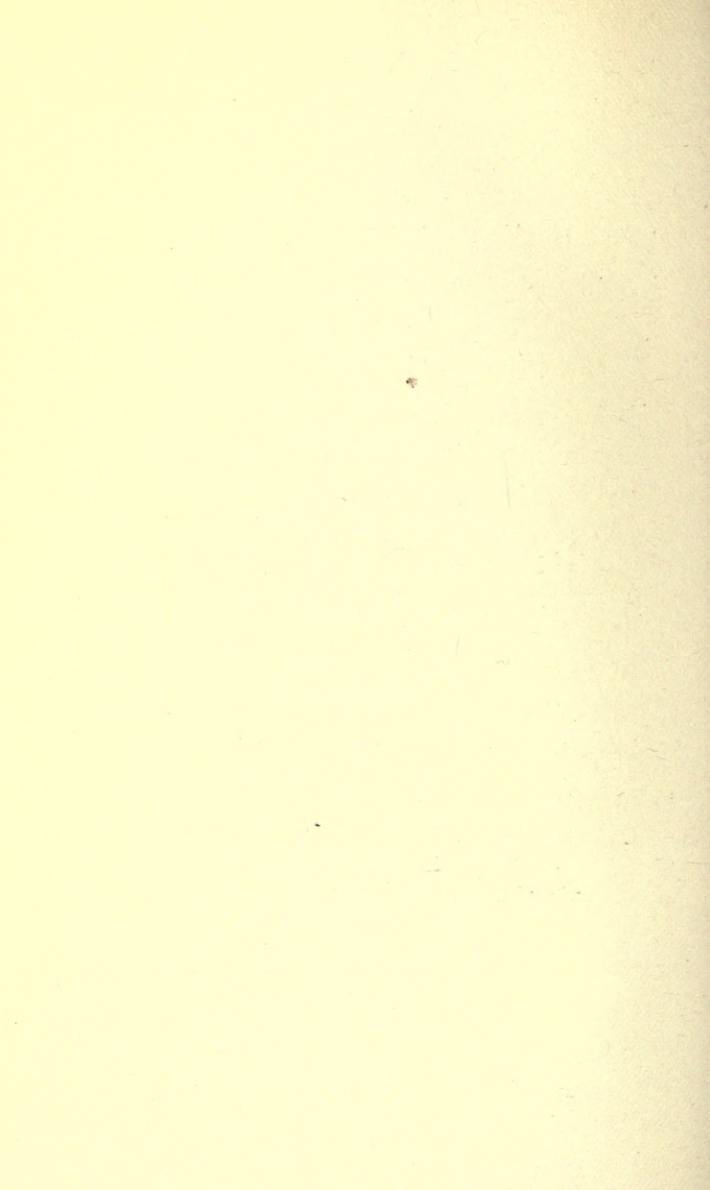
together in an inextricable mass at the lower end of the grounds. Miller rushed about from one to another, shouting directions from his type-written rules, and had several narrow escapes from being run over. In the confusion Harford managed to draw Miss Mary away from the rest of the party, and walked home with her alone by a circuitous wooded path which he had discovered in his wandering about the place. He never knew exactly how it happened, but the next morning he floated into a telegraph-office and wrote the following message to his friend Parker in Wyoming:

“Luckiest man in the world. Engaged to Miss M. B. BILL.”



THE NAPHTHA LAUNCH







## IX

THE day after the happy event had taken place Harford received a brief communication signed "M. B.," which he read not less than thirty times. It stated that Colonel Atterbury had lent them the launch for Friday afternoon, and couldn't he come out for a quiet little sail to Brant Island? Harford rather thought he could go, and he stepped on the train on that day, having progressed so far towards suburbanism as to procure a commutation ticket. He studied it closely, and indignantly noted that no allowance was made for Sunday journeys. Visions floated through his brain of a blissful sail with



Mary—it was Miss Mary no longer—to Brant Island, and a dreamy return in the twilight, with a few hours on the piazza after dinner, under the moonlight. Arrived at the Miller house, he found a large party awaiting him. There were Mrs. Marsh and her little boy Henry, Mrs. Miller, Uncle Chad, Russell Burnham, Jack, Marian, and two or three inevitable cousins.

As this was his first visit since the engagement, he was subjected to all manner of congratulation and handshaking. Mrs. Miller gave him a rather sombre kiss, Uncle Chad slapped him on the back and dragged him into the dining-room, where he went through a mysterious ceremony with a bunch of keys, a corkscrew, and a bottle of Apollinaris water, and young Russell Burnham hung on his arm, asserting that



they could play ball together all right now without bothering about things. This did not look much like a quiet afternoon and honeyed hours in the moonlight after dinner; but Harford was in a rapturous frame of mind, and smilingly helped to carry the wraps and rugs down to the wharf, with Mary at his side, and the children racing and chattering about his heels. The party settled themselves comfortably in the launch, with Uncle Chad at the wheel, and soon they were speeding away towards Brant Island, about ten miles distant. Uncle Chad was for allowing Harford and Mary about half the boat all to themselves, but the children would not leave them for long, and Miss Mary, as usual, encouraged their advances.

“Julia,” said Mrs. Miller to Mrs.



Marsh, "where, may I ask, did you get that sailor suit of Henry's?" Mrs. Miller and her friend were sitting on opposite sides of the boat, and were obliged to talk across Harford.

"I got it at the usual place—Chapin & Westover's. Why do you ask?"

"Because, Julia, that is exactly the kind of suit I have been trying to get for Jack for the past six months. You know, I have the utmost difficulty about Jack's clothes. He is not seven yet, and I always have to tell the man to show me nine-year-old things. It's the same way with shoes and everything. He's so much beyond his years in point of size, and it seems as if things never lasted him more than two days."

"Well, Ellen, if I were you I would try Chapin & Westover's. I'm sure they—"





*Rosina E. Sherwood.*

“DOWN TO THE WHARF”







“Julia Marsh, I have tried Chapin & Westover’s fifty times, if I have tried it once. That man Hubbell, who has been there so many years in charge of the children’s department— By-the-way, William” (this to Harford)—“I suppose I’m to call you William now—as I was saying, it will interest you to know that I used to go to Hubbell, at Chapin & Westover’s, to order Mary’s dresses when she was a little girl.”

Mary and Harford smile on one another, and Uncle Chad joins in with: “She was the prettiest little girl you ever saw, Harford, my boy.”

“You ought never to think of going to Hubbell, Ellen. He is so old, he does not know one thing from another, and my belief is that they only keep him out of charity.”

During this conversation Harford



made a feint of pointing out some objects of interest on the shore, and managed to get Miss Mary seated near the bow of the boat, where Uncle Chad affected to be deeply interested in the workings of the wheel, and at some personal inconvenience kept his head averted in order to give the young people a chance for a quiet talk. The cousins and little boys were in the stern, watching the man at the engine, and a delightful quiet prevailed. The boat rushed happily through the little waves, whose lapping drowned whispered conferences about important and delightful plans for the future.

Mrs. Marsh's voice broke the charmed stillness. "Ellen," said she, running her fingers down the back of Marian's neck, "do you think it is right to let that child wear such thin under-shirts,



at *any* time of the year? I don't see how you dare to risk it— Oh, she *does* wear bands? Well, I'm glad to hear it. I keep a red-flannel band on Henry winter and summer."

The children were summoned, and their wearing apparel was examined and discussed. Mrs. Miller thought Henry must be uncomfortable in such warm stockings.

"Ellen!" Mrs. Marsh almost screamed, "you *don't* mean to say that you have put Jack in cotton stockings before he has finished cutting his six-year-old molars!" And the unwilling Jack was seized upon and made to open his mouth and show his back teeth.

Then followed teething stories; and then Mrs. Marsh, who was a nervous person, and always more or less ill at ease, complained that the odor of the



naphtha made her feel a little faint, and she was so sorry to give trouble, but would Mr. Harford be so kind as to change places with her? She felt as if the breeze in the bow of the boat would be so very refreshing.

Harford, of course, rose to make the change, and as he did so was gratified to see that Uncle Chad was making a wry face over his starboard shoulder—a sort of stage aside expressing sympathy and regret that the tête-à-tête had been interrupted.

“Ellen,” shouted Mrs. Marsh, who appeared to revive quickly in the bow, “did Mrs. Freeman’s children come through the measles easily?”

“Oh yes, indeed; no trouble at all. You know, she had Dr. Gibson. He is without question the best man for measles in Starling.”



Rosina L. Sherwood.



“ ‘ ELLEN, YOU *DON'T* MEAN TO SAY THAT YOU HAVE PUT JACK IN COTTON STOCKINGS ! ’ ”







"Better than Dr. Black, do you think?"

"Oh, much better! I believe Gibson is quite famous; written two or three treatises."

"How long did Mrs. Freeman fumigate? Do you suppose she did it thoroughly? Did she—"

"Harford," interrupted Uncle Chad, peremptorily, "come up in the bow. I want to show you where the point of the reef is. There! you see that buoy?" Then he added, *sotto voce*, to Harford, "If that woman doesn't stop talking about fumigating things I'll scuttle the ship."

But Mrs. Marsh was not to be choked off, and as questions of hygiene occupied her mind above all others, she branched off on another subject of inquiry.



"Mary," she began, in a persuasive tone, "have you thought at all where you will settle down? Matters of this kind, you know, can't be considered too soon."

Miss Burnham, somewhat confused, said that they had given the subject no attention as yet. Mrs. Miller hoped it would be somewhere near their own house.

"Yes," said Uncle Chad; "I know just the site for a cosey little house on the lowland about four hundred yards south of us."

"Why, Ellen," said Mrs. Marsh, "Mr. Chadwick can't refer to the place you pointed out to me this morning?"

"Yes," Mrs. Miller said, "that is the place."

"For pity's sake!" said Mrs. Marsh. "That spot is a hot-bed of malaria. It



is notorious ; all the doctors are talking about it."

" Julia Marsh," said Mrs. Miller, severely, " such a thing as malaria was never known in Starling. There was never a case here—at least, never one that originated here. I suppose you refer to those people who lived near you in town, who came out to Starling after living in a house reeking with sewer-gas, and this air brought it all out. Our air brings out malaria, but no such thing ever originated here. It does not exist. So there !"

" Well," said Mrs. Marsh, doggedly, " why did Dr. Goodenow leave here ? He told me with his own lips that he had to give up the place because his wife's head was nearly shaken off with chills and his children were miserable."

" Yes," Mrs. Miller said, impressively,



“*why* did he leave here ? For the reason, Julia Marsh, that he was such a poor physician nobody would have him. His wife was a good enough little woman, but absolutely lacking in common-sense. Head nearly shaken off indeed ! It wouldn't have been a very grave loss if she had shaken it off altogether.”

“ Well,” said Mrs. Marsh, gazing listlessly at the horizon, “ Doctor Goodenow has a most exhaustive knowledge of *materia medica*, and that always carries great weight with me. By-the-way, about that land Mr. Chadwick was speaking of—wouldn't one be very much troubled with flies from the Grand View Hotel ?”

Controversies of this kind had gone on between Mrs. Miller and her dear Julia for the past fifteen years, as Uncle Chad knew, but nevertheless they con-



tinued to be bosom friends. Uncle Chad also knew that it was impossible to stop them, but he determined that the lovers should have a little quiet talk, so he called Mary to come and sit beside him, and then asked Harford to take the wheel while he went aft to examine the engine. From there he shouted directions as to the course in rounding Brant Island.

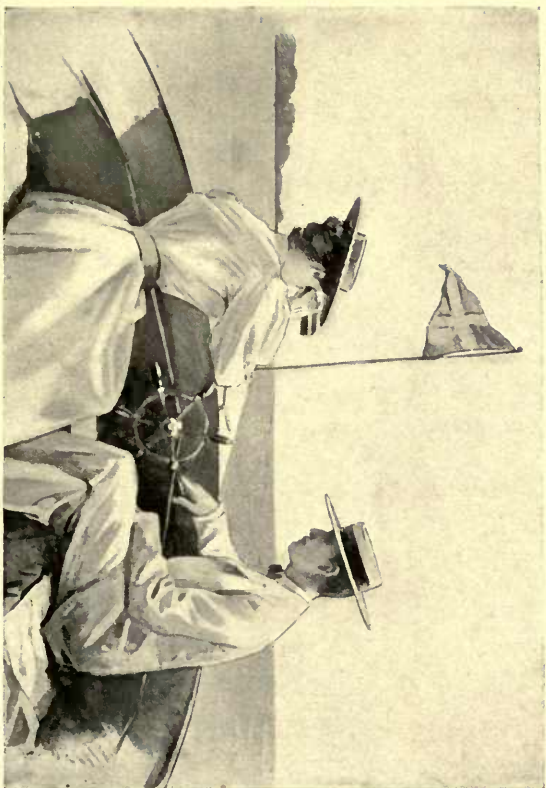
They had thought of landing, but a few warning drops of rain threw Mrs. Marsh into a state of extreme apprehension lest Henry should take cold. Henry was a sturdy lad, freckled of face and forward in demeanor, but Mrs. Marsh nervously explained that his was a most sensitive organism, and she feared he had inherited a delicate chest from the Marsh side. So they made for home, the children on the way becoming



very restless, and insisting on playing "pease-porridge hot" with Aunt Mary. Just as they reached the dock the rain came down in torrents, and there was a wild scramble for the house, Henry Marsh nearly sending his mother into hysterics by scampering through every puddle on the way. When they reached the piazza they were thoroughly soaked, and hastened to their various rooms, after swallowing a dose of whiskey-and-water administered by Uncle Chad, Mrs. Marsh meanwhile complaining that there never was a spot on the face of the globe so subject to sudden showers as Starling.

The rain, however, was a blessing in disguise, as, much to Uncle Chad's relief, Mrs. Marsh spent the evening in her room, doctoring her son with various lotions, liniments, and plasters, which she always carried about with her.





“THE LOVERS SHOULD HAVE A LITTLE QUIET TALK”







After dinner the storm cleared away, and Harford and Mary strolled down to take a look at the proposed site for their house. They were talking earnestly over plans for a tiny conservatory here and an up-stairs balcony there, and tea on the piazza, and an Italian garden, and bay-trees in terra-cotta jars, and various other attractive but rather impracticable arrangements, when they were disturbed by sounds of voices, and De Vinney and Dr. and Mrs. Grew approached with extended hands, and explained that they had heard the news, and were just on their way up to the house to offer congratulations.

"Welcome to our midst!" said De Vinney to Harford, shaking his hand repeatedly, bowing rapidly, and executing a complicated shuffle with his feet. Dr. Grew, in a feeble nasal voice, said,



"Pleased, 'm sure," while Mrs. Grew, who was in the way of consorting a good deal with summer boarders, said that the engagement struck her as being "perfectly *ullegant*." Harford and Mary replied with becoming grace, and the party of five sauntered back to the house, De Vinney sounding Harford as to his views on the number of saloons in proportion to the total of inhabitants, the propriety of re-electing Mr. Deshler to the Board of Supervisors, and other topics of local interest.

After they reached the house the trio from the village spent an hour or two in aimless desultory conversation, and at last took their leave, after further expressions of fervent congratulation.

When the time for saying good-night arrived, Harford found Miller and Uncle Chad with their heads together over the



library table, which was covered with rough sketches of plans, angrily discussing whether his new house should face due south or southeast. Two hours later he was awakened by hearing Mrs. Miller remonstrating with them over the stairs: they were keeping Mrs. Marsh awake, and did they know what time it was, and would they ever stop talking?







THE WEDDING







## X

THE preparations for Mary's wedding naturally raised a tremendous stir in the Miller household, and the young couple soon found that they were to have no voice in the final arrangements. Mr. Miller, after consulting with every ticket agent, conductor, and brakeman on the railroad, made out a dozen different schedules for trains for the transportation of the guests, and then found that his wife had settled the matter two weeks before, and was having the invitations engraved, with cards giving full directions about trains, hours, and so forth. Uncle Chad bustled about making suggestions, which Mrs. Miller passed by



unheeded. She was calmly sure of her own superior knowledge about wedding celebrations, and felt strong to grapple with the subject unaided by the men of the family.

The day before the wedding Uncle Chad took Mary aside and handed her a large blue envelope which contained a deed of the land for her new home and a number of securities. He was sorry, he said, that his present was not more showy, but explained apologetically that it was not a bad thing for young people to start in life backed up by "the elegant simplicity of the three-per-cents."

They had a fine day for the wedding. Uncle Chad, De Vinney, and little Marian wept steadily through the ceremony in the church, but afterwards made up for it by noisy demonstrations of joy at the reception. Dick Parker, Har-





“MISS MILLER FOLLOWED HIM ABOUT WITH A COLD AND CRITICAL EYE”







ford's friend from Wyoming, a retiring bronzed young man of stalwart frame, acted as best man, and was much disconcerted by Miss Lavinia Miller's attentions. She followed him about with a cold and critical eye, and, with her head on one side, walked round him and studied him from various points, with a view to using his type for some of her illustrations.

Mr. Johnstone Leigh, faultlessly attired, leaned gloomily against one of the piazza posts, occasionally bowing ceremoniously to the passers-by, while Mr. Billy Merriam circulated about among the guests, explaining to each one of his friends that this was one of the slickest picnics he ever was to.

De Vinney presented to the bride a photographic group of the hook-and-ladder company, framed in black walnut



with gilt scrolls, and told her that he had arranged for the Starling Bicycle Brigade to escort the bride and groom to the station, the wheels to be decorated with white wedding-favors. This ceremony was with difficulty averted at the last moment. Tommy Mason, surrounded by the young cousins, sang all the latest music-hall songs; and Uncle Chad, who had had several glasses of some fine Hector Madeira which he had reserved for Mary's wedding, trolled out in his deepest bass, "In good old Colony Days," and, to the great delight of the children, wound up by leading the Virginia Reel on the lawn, and then dancing the Sailor's Hornpipe in great shape.

Miller scurried about among the carriages, gave directions to the waiters, looked at his watch a great many times,





THE TOAST







and, aided by Miss Lavinia and Professor Judd, took various photographic views of the bridal party. Finally, amid loud cheers and the usual rice and slippers, Harford and his bride drove away, with little Jack seated in triumph on the box by the coachman, holding the whip, and Henry Marsh hanging on behind, followed at a distance by his shrieking mother.

When the Miller family began to tire of talking about the wedding, they turned their attention to the new house, and reopened the bitter and excited controversy which had been lulled to rest during the festivities. Miller was sure it should face southeast. "Warm in winter, cool in summer; chimney will draw better, you know; no trouble about the drainage; get your plumbing away from your windows; no danger of



pipes freezing; and then, as to the sewer—”

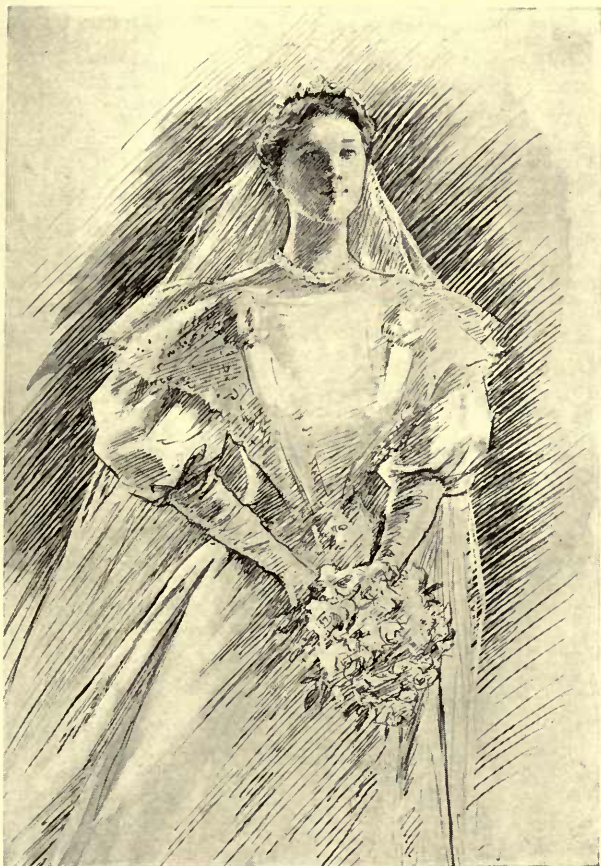
“ Ah !” said Judd, sententiously, “ that brings us to a very nice question. Exactly what *is* a sewer ?”

This was a poser, and the discussion was interrupted for a time while the Professor sketched the history of sewers, and their bearing upon the welfare of the human race from the earliest times to the present day.

Miss Lavinia hoped that, whatever else they did, they would not fail to place the house so as to secure that lovely view of the water through the cedar-trees, which was so like Puvis de Chavannes.

Miller laughed derisively at this last suggestion. “ That is absolutely impossible,” said he, “ for the simple reason, my dear Lavinia, that if your house





THE BRIDE







fronted that way, you would have your drying-ground and kerosene-kennel in full view of every one approaching it."

"Why not build a trellis around them?" interposed Uncle Chad.

"Oh yes; covered with Japanese ivy and clematis," Miss Lavinia suggested, "with bunchy trees sticking out over the top. It would be very decorative."

"Well, never mind about the front now," said Mrs. Miller, looking up from her knitting. "Where do you propose to put Mary's linen-closet?"

This suggested another line of thought, which was taken up and eagerly discussed, every one expressing a different opinion. When the house was at last finished it was a model cottage, thanks to the good taste of Mr. and Mrs. Harford, and to Mrs. Miller's talent for making things comfortable, and Mr. Miller's



knowledge of prosaic details, and last, but not least, to the severely watchful eye of Uncle Chad.

After Harford's return from his wedding-trip, he found himself becoming daily more divorced from the joys of town and more enthusiastic over the benefits of suburban residence. Unconsciously he drifted into the habit of drawing the long-bow on the all-absorbing topic of the thermometer, and underrating the effectiveness of the mosquitoes in his neighborhood. One day he happened into the club—his first visit there since his marriage—and dropped in a chair among a number of his former pals.

“Hallo, Harford!” said one; “been getting married, I hear, and giving us the cold shake.”



Rosina E. Sherwood.



"MARY SMILINGLY AWAITED HIM"







“Yes,” said Harford, “married and settled down in the country. Nothing like it, my boy; nothing like it!”

“Which? Marriage or the country?”

“Why, both; but, indeed, the country isn’t as black as it’s painted. In the summer you get out of this beastly hot town—have the water right at your elbow—sailing, rowing, fishing, swimming, tennis—everything.”

“Nice in winter, I suppose?”

“Well—er—” (rather feebly) “not so bad. You get used to it. Skating and so forth, you know.”

“Yes, I know—especially the ‘so forth.’ How long does it take you to get to Eversofar, or whatever the name of the place is?”

“Well, do you mean from the office to my house, or—?”



"Oh, I don't want an exact mathematical statement. About how long?"

"About an hour and thirteen minutes," said Harford, looking at his watch, "and, by George! I must run pretty soon, too."

"Have your regular seat at the whist table in the smoking-car, I suppose, Bill?" said one of the party.

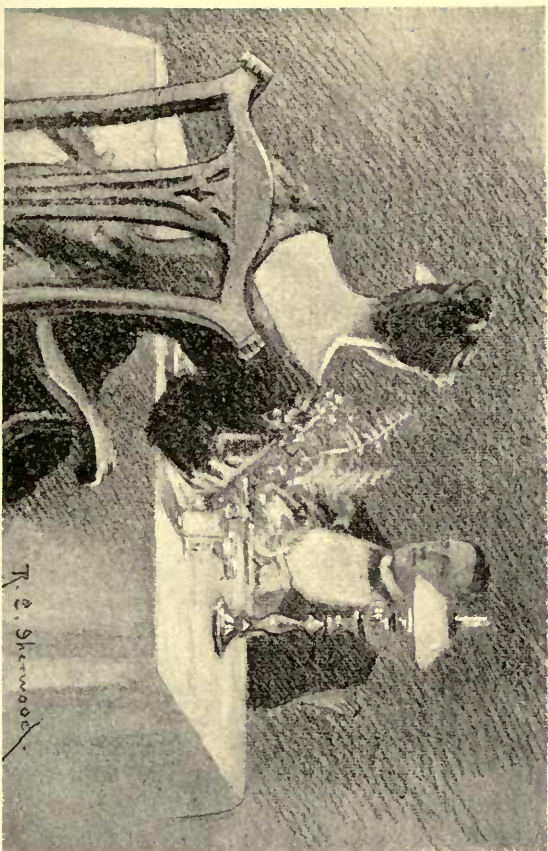
Harford laughed, but not very heartily.

"And do you belong to one of the first families of the town as you drive in?" said another.

"Any land for sale in the park near you?" said another.

Harford listened to them for a while, wondering how he could have found these men so agreeable a few months ago, and then made a dash for his train, out of breath and rather dishevelled, but





R. E. Sherwood.

"HARFORD WAS QUITE SATISFIED."







happy in the prospect of finding himself once more in a sympathetic atmosphere. On the way from the train he stopped at the office of De Vinney & Eddy to sign a petition, to be presented by the residents of Starling to the traffic-manager of the C. L. and S. L. Railroad, protesting against the abolition of the 8.13 train. At home he found Mary smilingly awaiting him on the piazza, and at dinner that night he told her, with a degree of seriousness that only a young married man can assume, that those fellows at the club were a frothy lot; good enough sort of fellows, of course, but leading a purposeless existence. As for Harford himself, he was quite satisfied that he and Mary had made no mistake in deciding to settle out of town.

THE END







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
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